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This document is an evaluation of a New Careers elementary teacher aide program offered by the Family Life Department of Seattle Community College and funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Based on classroom observations, interviews with instructors and students, and the guidelines laid down by Pearl and Riessman in New Careers for the Poor, the evaluation examines the effectiveness of teaching methods and curriculum in achieving the goals of the New Careers project and offers recommendations for improvement. The underlying emphasis of the recommendations is on the need for a reality-oriented approach--one which operates according to limited and achievable goals rather than impossible dreams; which recognizes the job of teacher aide as a worthy end in itself rather than as a step to further advancement; which gives top priority to practical job-related instruction rather than remedial and/or general education courses; which incorporates the standards and structure of the "outside world" rather than making "special provisions"; which recognizes the particular nature and needs of the type of student involved in the program and recruits and remunerates accordingly; and one which encourages openness and confrontation rather than evasion (particularly in matters involving "the middle-class guilt complex" of the instructors and the "resistance-to-change complex" of the students). (JS)

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June 1969

A Psychologist's View of Teacher Aide Training at Seattle Community College

Patricia W. Lunneborg

In January 1969 the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Services at Seattle Community College (SCC) approved a project to evaluate the New Careers elementary teacher aide program within SCC's Family Life Department. The two-year program is one of several career development programs funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The focus of SCC classroom observations and interviews with instructors and students was the effectiveness of teaching methods and curriculum in reaching the goals of the New Careers (NC) Project and recommendations for improvement.

From February through May 1969 two observers appeared irregularly and unannounced on Tuesdays and Thursdays and as unobtrusively as possible recorded what was happening in "first year" SCC classes (on the other three weekdays students participated in aide on-the-job training in city elementary schools). During the last week of May and first week of June the observers became interviewers and administered the same Teacher Aide Survey to all five SCC instructors and 21 of 23 "surviving" first year students. As the Survey instructions said, "Research like this is done to make something good like the idea of Teacher Aide training get better...to say how the Program works and how it can be made to work better."

In defense of both this naturalistic method and clinical appraisal, evaluative evidence of whether any educational program "works" should always be sought from a variety of sources--test-retest scores, jobs secured and held, credits and grades earned, opinions of employers, instructors, families, selves--for even then all the evidence can be "wrong." A given program can be called 100% effective when its success is primarily determined by the particular group of students selected. This is to say that a different group of students could meet an entirely different fate, even 100% dropout, applying the same course content, same teaching techniques, same assessment procedures. This evaluation concentrates upon observations of teaching and learning, and on the opinions of aides and instructors as to how effective their classroom interaction was.

This evaluation has been written to serve as a didactic device for helping the participants--students, instructors, administrators--to make this idea of establishing large numbers of nonprofessionals in education a satisfying reality to everyone involved in the training program. Consequently, rather than attempting to avoid psychological jargon it has been incorporated to stimulate new careerists to learn more about psychology. With more reading and discussion about such concepts as "desensitization" and "externalization," participants should be in a better position to bring under control undesirable behavior in themselves and others. This report is no magic formula any more than the guidelines laid down by Pearl and Riessman (1965) to whom frequent reference will be made, and the participants are challenged that they alone can change the program for the better. It must be confessed that the author had hoped to suspend judgment as to the worth of the whole idea of new careers. It seemed ideal to remain so objective and uninvolved as to be able to conclude,

if necessary, that the idea was unworkable and should be abandoned. In a very short time, however, this "scientific" attitude was impossible and new careers seemed like the postal system or social security or public school education--an essential institution about which the main question was why hadn't it been in operation for decades.

Teaching Effectiveness

The main thing right about the SCC program was the teaching. Judging from the seven methodological points stressed by Pearl and Riessman in non-professional training (p. 167), one has to conclude that all points are applied at SCC with success: (1) Continuous and immediate OJT (2) Activity rather than lecture approach, role training (3) Building group solidarity (this and role training are also greatly facilitated by Core sessions) (4) Individual supervision (20 of 21 students felt they got plenty) (5) Down-to-earth teaching style with concrete emphasis (6) Utilization of the "helper principle" (7) Development of personal styles.

As far as the integrated curriculum is concerned, human growth and occupational skills appeared very well designed but could possibly be improved with greater use of the helper principle and more development of individual talents. On the other hand, typing and remedial English and mathematics for the purpose of building a general high school education should be taught entirely separately from the teacher aide classes. This is not to say that "Basic Education" should change in any way, indeed, students could not help but improve their spelling and reading through the SRA reading program, but this result was secondary and should always be so. What they learned through doing were teaching and tutoring methods. There is no reason, therefore, for

the individualized, close teaching approach in Basic Education to be abandoned any more than the content of this course. What must be abandoned, however, is the illusion that one is ready for the GED after Basic Education. Typing, English, and mathematics would best be learned in a concentrated 5-day-a-week summer quarter with an individual teaching emphasis. Perhaps several summers would be required to bring an individual to the point of passing the GED, but in the meantime, during autumn, winter, and spring, the student had become a competent teacher aide through the theoretical background of Human Growth, the teaching methods inherent in Basic Education, and the special skills covered as Classroom/Playground Management. The materials selected by the teachers for this curriculum were judged relevant, interesting, and complete.

The program objectives should be reordered with greater emphasis placed upon the first two and least upon the third: (1) Skills necessary to be a competent teacher aide (2) An understanding of human development and personality (3) Basic academic skills for continued academic study. If highest priority were given teacher aide training an objection shared by students and instructors could be eliminated--both felt learning was hindered because students could not see the relevance of all class material to their aide job. They both also felt that the difficulty level of class material could be raised and that learning would be facilitated by teachers being more authoritarian with respect to noise and discipline problems in class. While informality and the down-to-earth character of instruction was generally an asset, there should be no reluctance about curtailing informality when it no longer facilitates learning. Students wanted very much to feel like other college students, that allowances were not being made for them,

that much was being expected from them, and they would be graded down like other college students when their performance fell short of expectation. How could they feel truly competent if less was being required of them than in other school aide programs or in other family life classes?

The selection of instructors for this program was excellent and the group should always include blacks and whites. SCC instructors were genuinely fond of the aides and were in return well-liked and respected. They were very sympathetic and supportive and made good use of immediate reinforcement for good class performance. They were not defensive about what they did not know and through example tried to make the students more accepting of little failures and mistakes. They had continually to dispute the contention of students that "teachers (and therefore teacher aides) can't make mistakes." An example of such a nondefensive maneuver was presentation of a technique for dividing fractions that was "learned just last night" from a new book left by a salesman. "When you're a teacher you constantly learn new things." Firmness and encouragement were also effectively used to cope with reluctance to perform in front of the class and with refusal to try something new. By the end of May the entire class would try anything new and was obviously enjoying the personal changes that teachers had consciously helped bring about in them. Two-thirds of the students surveyed felt they were now more able to express themselves to others, more demanding of themselves, more flexible, imaginative and spontaneous, and had greater self-respect. Students who entered the program late (as late as March!) naturally enough saw fewer changes in themselves.

The area in which instructors need to improve most (and they are well aware of this) is discipline or handling behavior problems. It is even difficult to use these words thinking about adult students, and it must be equally

difficult to cope with this problem when one's repertoire was established with children. Curiously, class discussions of discipline in the schools (running in halls, playground fights, rock throwing) tended to elicit all kinds of acting-out in SCC classes, particularly verbal. It was as if the students were presenting instructors with a real-life instance and challenging them to demonstrate how to control it. Calling for attention and quiet are just as appropriate with adults as children ("Sh-h-h" worked very well), but of particular value would be immediate discussions of the feelings which students just experienced that provoked this defensive defiance (parroting the teacher, telling irrelevant jokes, laughing loudly). Students and instructors need to review and remain aware of the defenses an individual uses unconsciously when threatened, angry, frightened, insecure. Further, the ways in which group members reinforce and nonreinforce acting-out need to be made more explicit. In this way teacher aides will gain greater control over all classroom situations, whether they are in charge or simply a fellow classmate interested in getting more out of the class.

Instructors often reminded students of the relevance of what they were learning for their teacher aide role. This was a very good technique and not only maintained waning interest but gave students the will to learn if the lesson was difficult in addition to appearing of little practical value. Another stimulation to learning was variety in the methods used--guest lecturers, class demonstrations by second year students, field trips, discussions following movies. It was felt the most effective method, however, of teaching child development and teacher aide skills was active group participation and demonstration with the instructor more a monitor and reinforcer and the students cooperating with one another in providing the substance and discussion

of a topic, e.g., having all students with toddlers sit as a panel up front and describe their children at that developmental stage with questions from the teachers and remainder of the class.

Some picayune recommendations: (1) Have teacher aides take turns being aides to their SCC instructors (2) Teach playground games on some covered, nearby, asphalt playground with class divided into competitive teams for the year (3) Schedule all Core groups at same time, e.g., Tuesday 12:30 - 2 (with Thursday 12:30 - 2 a study hall). Traffic from Core was highly disruptive to ongoing classes (4) Whatever and whenever students and teachers write on blackboard use printscript (5) Homework assignments should be written on board each day for all courses with date and time (a.m., p.m.) due. (6) 8:30 - 4:30 is a very long day for concentrated college classes. Include study hall on 1 day in middle inasmuch as students should have no "extra" encouragement to come late or leave early.

"You're doing it all right--curriculum, methods, teaching emphases" must be a very disquieting evaluation. The participants can be expected to retort that they know not everything's right with the program and if it isn't the teaching, then what is it?

The Middle-Class Guilt Complex. One first striking impression of the program was an undercurrent of administrative antagonism between OEO's New Careers Office and SCC. It was baffling because on both sides were intelligent, sensitive, compassionate individuals dedicated to the war on poverty and the concept of new careers as espoused by Pearl and Riessman. On the surface of staff meetings were strained cordiality and carefully-worded, affectless discussions of problems and student feelings, but one could sense both SCC and NC personnel equally emotionally-involved and hurt when student

morale, attendance, or whatever declined. Both personnel openly reiterated the new careers tenet that the poor are not to blame for their plight but instead it is the result of external forces. It was said the poor blame the middle-class and it was unspoken but clear that these personnel literally believe that they are somehow responsible for the condition of poverty. One reason for involvement in such a program could be guilt over middle-class status. Helping the less fortunate is one way to allay this guilt and anxiety. Both staffs seemed very super-ego-involved with the success of the program and when they sensed it failing, they seemed personally threatened with its loss and prone to blame other professionals inasmuch as blaming students was unacceptable. One student taunted a teacher with, "If too many quit, you'll be out of a job," pointing up a more obvious, economic outcome of the program not working, but this is not the level at which the staffs are threatened.

To be more effective they must be able to say to themselves, "The poor are not responsible for their plight but neither am I." Individual staff members can help one another combat over-concern with day-to-day failures and to honestly accept dropout and turnover as unavoidable in a project this new and unsettled. "There must be a (greater) willingness to accept failures on the part of both professional and administrative staff, especially in the early stages of these new programs." (Pearl and Riessman, p. 115) The payoff in accepting as fallacy personal responsibility for any given world ill is that the individual is then in a better position to do something constructive about it and further reduce his guilt. Students perceive this guilt very quickly and use it in self-defeating ways, so feelings about being a have in a world of have-nots and maintaining a resolute, nondefensive manner when others try to hold you personally responsible for their troubles is a problem

that staff Core meetings might consider. The teacher aide instructor is no more responsible for what happened to trainees prior to the program than a psychotherapist is responsible for the conditions which affected the mental health of his new patients.

Priorities

Despite the fact that the teacher aide program is a career development program for the purpose of training the disadvantaged for entry-level positions in human service agencies, lowest priority is given job-related instruction by the local NC Office in their Fourth Progress Report of February 1968. Further, in much new careers thinking, nonprofessional "jobs" are contrasted most unflatteringly with a "career, a sequence of jobs," the former being associated with pejoratives such as "low-pay, dead-end, burdensome, second-class and (curiously) service." From having observed the program as it functions, it is felt that giving highest priority to general education at the high school and college levels is hurting the program. First, two days a week in college classes is not enough time to accomplish all that the NC office would like teacher aides to learn. It is to the credit of the SCC teaching staff that rather than sacrifice the instruction necessary to train competent aides, they tried to do remedial work on top of imparting skills useful to schools. They have turned out a group which they judge competent to handle myriad duties ranging from tutoring reading to assisting the school nurse, and, just as important, a group which judges itself "capable" to "very capable" in these skills.

Second, by NC having conveyed that both instructors and students should really be capable of a whole lot more (more worthwhile), the participants in

this really exciting educational experiment are robbed of the feeling of accomplishment they deserve. In spite of illness, family worries, lack of money, not being able to study enough, and the demonstrations at the college, 15 of 21 student survey respondents were satisfied with their studies, felt their classes useful, and very much enjoyed the time spent at SCC. From 17 to 20 felt the program had changed them so that now they were more willing to try new things, had greater confidence they could still learn, and now understood children better and had greater interest in working with them. But if one swallows the new careers credo uncritically, all this is no cause for rejoicing if you didn't also pass the GED and take college parallel courses at night. One can't help but feel the disadvantaged are being exploited again by having the nonprofessional and essential jobs for which they can be trained debased. It is as if new career theorists would replace hopelessness and despair with a rankling, unrealistic sense of personal dissatisfaction and frustration for never having advanced far enough. Only three students gave teacher aide as their ultimate job choice. The others all aspired to professional status--teacher, social worker, psychologist, counselor--and 15 planned to get bachelor's degrees. Yet their teachers felt only one-tenth or less could complete a bachelor's degree assuming current requirements in four-year schools. Also, when "opportunity to rise to top level of profession" was rated with other job characteristics, it was ranked by students far below:

Being of service to others
 Knowing exactly what is expected
 Job stability and security
 Work with people rather than things
 Working convenient hours for taking care of family too

Least important on a job to students were:

Being a leader
Being responsible for running an organization
Not being supervised

Thus, when perpetual advancement is compared with other aspects to employment it is obvious that things which are more important to this group preclude rising to the top, e.g., working convenient hours and not wishing to be responsible for running an organization.

Indefinite advancement in any area of work is appropriate only for a minority of any group of individuals. Thus, the opportunity to advance should be real but not sold wholesale as a philosophy that all true new careerists should embrace. Thus, it is recommended that job-related instruction be given highest priority and that the GED and college transfer courses be considered secondary and perhaps not taught until later, on released time from the schools when new careerists are working as full-fledged teacher aides. Or the program could begin with a summer quarter devoted entirely to improving English, reading, and mathematics, GED preparation in classes designed for that purpose, and typing.

Transfer of Credit

The primary recommendation to be made with respect to nontransferability of SCC teacher aide credit is that the program should be presented to future candidates completely honestly. Changes within the educational establishment take years to bring about even when inertia is the only resistance. Thus, just because the New Careers Office and Seattle Community College desire and work towards transferability of credit for OJT and course work does not mean the program should be described as its proponents would like it to be. False expectations can only undermine and damage the program. No matter how far

negotiations for credit have proceeded, until credit is a printed, catalog fact, it should not be presented even as a possibility to the prospective aide. Instead, the real situation, which today is no transfer credit for any participation in the two-year Teacher Aide program, is the picture candidates should receive. Currently this means that prospective teachers should be steered away from the aide program and helped to take only courses which count towards the bachelor's degree. Further, the concept of career-line advancement to professional status should be presented as an ideal towards which new careers administrators are working, but for individuals concerned about their fate in the teacher aide program, it is irresponsible to instill anticipation for something which may be years from becoming reality.

It is the responsibility of Seattle Community College to determine the transferability of its various courses and of changing the nature of courses to acquire transfer status when this is desirable and feasible. For example, there will always be a limit as to how many credits of practicum can be counted towards a bachelor's degree but certainly some credit for satisfactory completion of 1 and 2 years of the program would seem in order. Within four-year schools there is always a maximum amount of practicum credit allowed. Teacher aide transfer credit would never be "enough" for the amount of time spent in class and in school, i.e., nowhere near 90 credit hours, but currently no jobs or apprentice programs allow college credit. Because OJT and class topics are so interwoven at present, it was not felt that the program could be compared to any transfer course or even said to substantially cover all the material in any specific transfer course, but if advance credit examinations exist at SCC for, for example, Introductory Psychology or Developmental Psychology, then students could take these exams and receive credit in this manner.

Recruitment

Pearl and Riessman tend to treat "selection," "screening procedures," and "recruitment" as dirty words in relation to the new careers concept. Selection implies exclusion, partiality, discrimination, all of which antagonize anti-poverty workers who feel selection will exclude those most in need of employment. Pearl and Riessman argue that traditional screening procedures such as test scores and prior records be rejected and that the fewer prejudgments of suitability made the better.

The SCC teacher aide program provides evidence that selection is critical to the success of new careers training in an indirect and unexpected way. This group of trainees was felt to be too heterogeneous for optimal learning. Selection to achieve greater homogeneity is therefore recommended. The prior job and educational background factors could be chosen at random if it was important to demonstrate that although the program discriminated, the eligible group had arbitrarily been drawn from a hat, for example, one might draw only students with a 6th - 10th grade education and earning no more than \$150 a week if employed. On the other hand, the suggestion in Pearl and Riessman (p. 189) that the goals of the program determine the characteristics of trainees makes more sense. If the goals and priorities of the new careers teacher aide program were resolved and solidified, these goals could dictate the limiting background characteristics. If, for example, number one was training competent teacher aides, number two completing the GED, and last and least important providing the opportunity to complete a college education, then certainly no one with college credit should enter the program nor anyone who is already making more money than teacher aides earn. One plan might be to

select only students with a 10th or 11th grade education, earning less than \$500. a month, and over 25 years of age. Further, by starting this group at the beginning of summer quarter and spending that quarter (3 months) solely on GED preparation and typing classes, the quarter's performance could serve as the screening device. Pearl and Riessman have suggested that short-term intensive training can be used in selecting new career candidates (p. 18).

It is essential for preventing dropouts and poor morale and for building group cohesiveness that aides be more alike to start with in ways that make a difference in this training program--prior education, employment, perhaps age. When the purpose of selection is to benefit the trainees selected how can it be wrong? If a candidate must have a record to be a parole trainee, on welfare to be a welfare aide, why can't teacher aides be high school dropouts? Indeed, why must selection criteria be negative or disadvantaged? What is wrong with excluding the very young and recently educated or persons earning over a given sum?

An example of the difficulty caused by the great differences among class members was the understandable reluctance of students with over a year of college to participate enthusiastically in rudimentary English or mathematics lessons. But their presence off in a corner of the classroom doing something different (but certainly more appropriate to their background) was distracting and encouraged resistance in others to normal class activities on inappropriate bases. "I can't do that" and "I'm not feeling too well" replaced "If she doesn't have to do it, why do I?"

Resistance to Change

A puzzling phenomenon in every voluntary educational setting is that students sometimes behave as if they did not want to learn. Examples of the

great resistance among teacher aides were absence, tardiness, sleeping in class, leaving the room for brief periods, stony silence in response to a question, noise in response to a lecture, bringing children to class. Students are not likely to say they do these things because they are afraid of changing (not to be confused with being afraid you cannot change or learn), instead, they externalize and name something out there, beyond their control, as the cause of their behavior--couldn't get a baby-sitter, caught a cold, didn't catch the bus, couldn't hear the question, the lecture material was too easy. Unfortunately, although their teachers actually understood this ambivalence as students felt their old way of life being replaced with a new routine, there was not enough open discussion of this problem. Instead, the teachers passively accepted whatever external excuses were offered rather than help students break down these self-defeating behaviors. Why? Again, it would seem an instance of countertransference where teachers overidentify with students to the detriment of the students. Certainly most students faced undeniable reality problems as a result of being economically disadvantaged. Thus, on any given day or faced with any given incident (such as children in the room), the teachers' guilt over their better circumstances plus the difficulty of working with resistance to change disposed them to avoid confrontation. Curiously, students were able to identify resisting behaviors in other students and were greatly annoyed by them. Not only is someone else's yawning openly throughout class annoying, it activates everyone's latent resistance to change and makes it more difficult for everyone to concentrate, learn, change. But even the students avoided criticizing self-defeat when they saw it.

Another critical way in which countertransference worked to hurt students was in the lack of firm rules with respect to tardiness, smoking, length of

breaks, etc. For next year rules could be worked out with the NC office, SCC, and this year's students including machinery for future student groups to modify the rules. But the vagueness about what one could and could not do was very demoralizing to students and when limits got tested (as they always will) and NC or SCC gave way, it further lowered student confidence in and respect for the program.

Course Testing (and Better Pay)

No test should ever be given open-book in the teacher aide program. Such exercises should be called exercises and contrasted with real tests where one relies only on what's in one's own head. Teachers were far too easygoing about test administration not realizing that by giving in to the fears of students they were only teaching greater resistance to tests and increasing anxiety about them. Tolerating students helping one another and looking up answers says in effect that the teacher does not believe the students have learned anything and has doubts as to student ability to master the material. Real tests should be given during every class day in an effort to desensitize students in the same way that elementary school children of today have learned to take testing for granted. By starting with easy tests on which all can do well on the very first day of instruction and by never acquiescing to fears and protests, an invaluable service ancillary to teacher aide training will be performed. Teacher aides may well be asked to administer and proctor school achievement tests, etc., and must impart a realistic attitude towards testing to help the children. Resistance to testing, fear of failure, etc., must be discussed when they appear, but more importantly, a program of desensitization initiated from the beginning of the school year. Talking about fear, its

irrationality, the defenses used to cope with it is not enough; these self-defeating modes of reacting in the testing situation must be systematically extinguished. The personal benefit of being better able to face civil service exams, the GED, etc., would also be unquestionably great. Teachers should remain in the room during all tests and insist that testing rules be observed. It was felt the practice of leaving the class alone was primarily for the instructors' protection, i.e., they literally could not face up to the problem of cheating. Even doctoral comprehensives and graduate school admission tests are proctored. This group of adults deserves to be treated like any other adults being tested.

With respect to achievement testing (by the NC Office, or SCC, or whatever auspices) to assess the impact of the program upon reading comprehension, mathematics reasoning, etc., it is suggested that required testing time be rewarded by double time pay. Fundamental to the teacher aide program is pay, pay to go to school. If most of the incentive to attend school is extrinsic, then even greater extrinsic rewards must be offered to assure high motivation and cooperation (and a more reliable estimate of what has been learned) in testing.

All students felt they should be paid at a higher rate and the author concurs. Because child-care centers and emergency student loans are broad educational issues affecting all SCC students and necessarily requiring years to resolve, the alternative solution for these students is higher pay from New Careers. In terms of where the responsibility lies to ameliorate the very real money problem behind dropout and irregular attendance, it lies primarily with OEO. Students must be reimbursed well enough beyond what they need for survival to eliminate the question of whether or not becoming a teacher aide

is literally "worth it." More money would solve lots of problems. It ought to create interest in many more prospective aides so that a better job of selection could be done. It makes the very realistic demands of being in attendance and on time more enforceable because students would know that if they were not willing to invest themselves completely in the program, there were others willing and waiting. More money should remove the child-care problem and make it possible to insist that bringing children to class had to be interpreted as resistance. But, again with respect to testing per se, disadvantaged children have been shown to score much higher on tests when the situation had an extrinsic reward (party, food, money). Similarly, until the intrinsic rewards of the middle-class world of work get internalized, the NC program should find some material means for motivating students to do their best when tested.

Another strategy to lower defensiveness about testing would be to have test partners who write tests for one another which they then exchange, take under strict recall conditions, grade, and review together. For example, the last half hour of a morning devoted to new math might be spent in test construction (10 min.), test taking (10 min.), and test grading and discussion (10 min.) strictly within the pairings of students.

Need for Structure

These students, many of whom have not been recently in school or on the job, need as much if not more than other students to know exactly what is expected of them in terms of attendance, punctuality, schedules and assignments and the various consequences of not complying. SCC and NC administrators should agree before the onset of training on these matters with respect to the college

and the public schools, e.g., how many hours are to be spent each day in the public schools, when the aide should arrive and leave, and how much time she can request and arrange for break time in her schedule. Students should be given at the beginning of training a list of the rules, punishments, and procedures for modifying same. It should be noted that hypocrisy, "Do as I say, not as I do" is as painful and as harmful to these students as it is to the growing child. If smoking is forbidden in all SCC classrooms, then no teacher should ever rationalize having a cigarette (the students aren't back yet, just one can't hurt, its a ridiculous rule anyway). Similarly, when a visit is scheduled by an NC administrator, he should appear and on time since the same level of responsibility is asked of teacher aides.

A big item under structure has to be the high noise level which teachers tolerated and contributed to. Much of the time when several different activities, individual study, or testing were going on, there was too much talking for good concentration and learning. While the majority of teachers and students agreed the classroom was too noisy when surveyed, there was seldom any complaining in the actual situation.

Teacher Aide Job

The students learned for themselves in OJT just how valuable they can be to children, teachers, and schools, and how necessary is the role of teacher aide/assistant, the first two levels in Pearl and Riessman's breakdown of teacher functions, the highest being supervising teacher. Because the job of teacher aide is a worthwhile, lifelong occupation, issue is taken with the emphasis Pearl and Riessman place on unlimited advancement. "Therein lies the essential difference between mere job creation and the new career concept.

Entrance to a new career sequence will begin with low-level, low-paid, low-status functions, but...opportunity for advancement will be provided, which, if carried to its ultimate, will be unlimited." (p.31)

That the opportunity to advance should always be possible in any human endeavor is not questioned. But can't this concept exist without at the same time degrading the idea of a job ("mere" job) and treating the entry positions as contemptible? Low level does not have to mean low pay or low status, as the work situation in socialistic countries demonstrates. Secondly, many people are content to remain in a satisfying job; it was what they've been studying and struggling for, and they have no desire to leave it. For example, most teachers have no interest in being principals any more than they are going to like leaving the classroom to become supervising teachers. Good pay, job security and stability, and the concept of a job are not inferior to the new careers concept, just older. Building in discontent with nonprofessional status is also harmful from a logistic point of view--there will always be fewer people at the top of any hierarchy than at the lower levels. That everyone can't occupy top positions is a reality factor not personal failure for everyone below.

The students themselves provided the most telling argument against overemphasizing the attainment of professional status. They continually expressed displeasure over aide duties, feeling that if the teacher gave up some function to them, it must be unpleasant and beneath her. Consequently, many aide duties were resented and aides longed to be doing exactly what the teacher was rather than developing the special skills teacher aides are supposed to practice. One can't blame them: "The teacher, no longer burdened with menial tasks (now the responsibility of aide, assistant, and associate), would be

liberated to act as a true professional." (p.61) There is agreement in several references that playground supervision is an important aide function. Thus, pride needs to be instilled in this assignment and aides prepared beyond the average teacher to handle this specific situation.

Aside from SCC teaching staff reinforcing the essential and esteemable nature of the aide role, future students would be helped by being asked each month to reevaluate what they believe they can and should do for schools. This monthly reevaluation would give principals and teachers something concrete to consider, modify, and negotiate and give the aide a reassuring resumé of her competencies, rights, roles, and responsibilities at all points in her training. Aides should bear the major responsibility for introducing the school system to the vision of redefining the teaching role into different functions and to the particular roles they are to perform.

It should be noted that elsewhere in Pearl and Riessman professionalization of nonprofessionals is actually described as a danger. In the chapters relating to mental health aides and social work (homemaker) aides there is no mention of the career line made so much of in teaching. And in teaching as in mental health today the greatest need is for trained nonprofessionals. All of the women the author watched over these months were courageous and capable--they will all make good teacher aides. And they are what makes one believe in the New Careers Program--not the ideals or concepts, but the people who pull themselves up with the ideals or in spite of them.

Reference

Pearl, A., & Riessman, F. New careers for the poor. New York: Free Press, 1965.